

## Message Text

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TAGS: ECE

SUBJ: SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE ECE GROUP OF RAPORTEURS ON  
CONTAINER TRANSPORT (GRCT)

1. COOPERATION WITH UNCTAD ON A CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL  
INTERMODAL TRANSPORT. THE UNCTAD SECRETARIAT INTRODUCED  
THE FOUR STUDY DOCUMENTS PREPARED FOR THE UNCTAD INTER-  
GOVERNMENTAL PREPARATORY GROUP (IPG) AND REPORTED ON THE  
PROGRESS OF THE IPG WHICH IS MEETING CONCURRENTLY WITH THE  
GRCT. THE UNCTAD SECRETARIAT VIEWS THE 3RD IPG MEETING  
AS A "BREAKTHROUGH" IN THE SENSE THAT THE NEW DOCUMENT WILL  
BECOME AN EXPRESSION OF THE NEW ECONOMIC ORDER AND WILL IN  
PHILISOPHY BE CONSONANT WITH THE CONVENTION ON THE LINER  
CONFERENCE CODE OF CONDUCT. THE US RAPORTEUR STATED THAT  
UNCTAD'S STUDY WAS BASED ON THE MISTAKEN ASSUMPTION THAT THE  
MULTIMODAL CONVENTION WOULD REGULATE CONTAINER TRANSPORT  
ONLY. AS FAR AS THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WERE CONCERNED  
LESS EXPENSIVE INTERMODAL FORMS OF TRANSPORTATION SUCH AS  
LASH AND SEABEE WERE MORE PETINENT STUDY SUBJECTS OF A  
MULTIMODAL CONVENTION. HE STRESSED THAT THE STUDIES MIGHT  
MISLEAD READERS INTO ASSUMING THAT INTERMODAL TRANSPORT WAS  
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POSSIBLE ONLY THROUGH GREAT CAPITAL INVESTMENT IN CONTAINER

TECHNOLOGY WHEREAS IN FACT ADEQUATE INTERMODAL PORT FACILITIES COULD BE CREATED FOR AS LITTLE AS TWO MILLION DOLLARS. THE RAPPPORTUER ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE STUDIES APPEARED TO NEGLECT THE INTEREST OF CONSUMERS IN THE DELIVERY OF GOODS AT THE CHEAPEST TRANSPORTATION COST AND THE LEAST RIK OF LOSS OR DAMAGE.

THE CHAIRMAN DECIDED THAT THE GRCT, IN ORDER TO OBSERVE ITS MANDATE FROM THE INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE, SHOULD PLAN TO MEET AGAIN SHORTLY BEFORE THE 4TH IPG. THE MULTIMODAL CONVENTION WILL BE THE MAJOR AGENDA ITEM FOR THE NEXT SESSION OF THE GRCT.

2. PREPARATION FOR THE UNCTAD AD HOC INTERGOVERNMENTAL GROUP ON STANDARDIZATION IN CONTAINER TRANSPORT. THE GRCT SPENT THE MAJOR PART OF ITS TIME ON A WRITTEN CONTRIBUTION TO THE UNCTAD GROUP OF EXPERTS. THE GRCT WAS IN GENERAL AGREEMENT ON THE DRAFT PREPARED BY THE ECE SECRETARIAT (TRANS/GE.24/GRCT/R.22). FEW CHANGES WERE MADE. IN ESSENCE ECE WILL EXPRESS TO UNCTAD THAT THE INDUSTRY SPONSORED STANDARDS ESTABLISHED THROUGH ISO ARE SATISFACTORY AND THAT A NEW CONVENTION ON CONTAINER STANDARDS IS NOT NEEDED. THE REPORT ALSO EMPHASIZES THE LARGE CAPITAL INVESTMENT MADE IN EXISTING CONTAINERS AND THE NEED TO PROTECT THIS INVESTMENT.

3. CODE INDICATING MODES OF TRANSPORT. THE US RAPPOREUR EXPRESSED INTEREST IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CODE BUT INDICATED THE NEED TO STUD THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE CODE WILL BE USED, WHO WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR INSERTION OF THE CODE INTO THE BILL OF LADING, WHETHER PICK-UP AND DELIVERY WILL AUTOMATICALLY CHANGE MODAL TRANSPORT INTO INTERMODAL TRANSPORT, AND THE POSSIBLE LIABILITY IMPLICATIONS.

4. INVESTIGATION OF STRESS DURING TRANSPORT. FRG REPORTED ON THE GERMAN STUDY. OTHER RAPPOREURS COMMENTED FAVORABLY ON THE STUDY. ONLY THE DUTCH QUESTIONED THE NEED FOR THIS KIND OF RESEARCH. THE US RAPPOREUR STATED THAT THE FAILURE OF CARGO RESTRAINT SYSTEMS IN ONE MAJOR ACCIDENT HAD CAUSED THE US TO STUDY THIS SUBJECT AND THE UNCLASSIFIED

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STUDY WOULD SOON BE RELEASED. ANOTHER US STUDY INVESTIGATES THE EFFECT OF CARGO FORCES AS A CAUSE OF CONTAINER ACCIDENTS. THIS STUDY WILL ALSO SOON BE COMPLETED.

5. IMPLEMENATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION FOR SAFE CONTAINERS(CSC). RAPPOREURS BROUGHT THE GRCT UP TO DATE ON RATIFICATION EFFORTS IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES. IT APPEARS THAT THE CSC WILL HAVE THE 10 RATIFICATIONS

NECESSARY FOR ENTRY INTO FORCE THIS FALL. SEVERAL PROVOCATIVE QUESTIONS OF INTERPRETATION WERE ASKED BY THE DUTCH RAPPORTEUR. (1) IF A CONTRACTING STATE SPOTS A DEFECTIVE CONTAINER THAT HAS BEEN CERTIFIED BY ANOTHER CONTRACTING COUNTRY, WILL THE FIRST STATE BE ABLE TO IMMOBILIZE THE CONTAINER? WOULD A DISAPPROVAL MARK BE POSSIBLE? THE US INDICATED THAT IT WOULD INTERPRET ART. IV LITERALLY AND WOULD NOT ISSUE DISAPPROVAL MARKS. MOST RAPPORTEURS THOUGHT THAT ONLY THE ISSUING COUNTRY COULD REMOVE A VALID SAFETY PLATE. (2) SUPPOSE A CONTAINER OWNER IS DISSATISFIED WITH THE INSPECTION PROCESS OF HIS OWN GOVERNMENT. WHAT IS HIS RECOURSE? THE US RAPPORTUER POINTED OUT THAT SUCH A SITUATION WOULD BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL GOVERNMENT AND NOT ONE OF THE OTHER CONTRACTING STATES. (3) SUPPOSE THE CONTAINER IS NOT AT HOME BASE EXACTLY AT THE END OF THE TWO YEAR PERIOD AT WHICH A CONTAINER MUST BE INSPECTED? THE US RAPPORTUER STATED THAT TH US WOULD PERMIT A CONTAINER OPERATOR TO INSPECT HIS CONTAINERS ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD.

6. CONTAINER TRANSPORT STATISTICS. THE US ANNOUNCED THAT IT WAS IN THE PROCESS OF PREPARING A NEW ISSUE OF DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORTATION OF US FOREIGN TRADE TO BE COMPILED BY THE CENSUS, DOT AND THE US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS. THE STUDY WILL BE BASED ON 1973 STATISTICS. BRUNGART

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